**STATE OF ILLINOIS**
**ILLINOIS COMMERCE COMMISSION**

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| Ameren Illinois Company d/b/a Ameren Illinois | : | Docket No. 12-0080 |
| Petition for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity, pursuant to Section 8-406.1 of the Illinois Public Utilities Act, and an order pursuant to Section 8-503, to construct, operate and maintain a new 138,000 volt electric line in Champaign County, Illinois | : | |

# INITIAL BRIEF OF THE STAFF OF THE ILLINOIS COMMERCE COMMISSION

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# INITIAL BRIEF OF THE STAFF OF THE ILLINOIS COMMERCE COMMISSION

Staff of the Illinois Commerce Commission ("Staff"), by and through its undersigned counsel, pursuant to Section 200.800 of the Illinois Commerce Commission's ("Commission" or "ICC") Rules of Practice (83 Ill. Adm. Code 200.800), respectfully submits its Initial Brief in the instant proceeding. Staff recommends that the Commission grant a certificate and issue an order pursuant to Section 8-503 of the Public Utilities Act ("Act") for the transmission line that Ameren Illinois Company d/b/a Ameren Illinois (the "Company" or "AIC") proposes in accordance with its preferred route, with one modification set forth *infra*. Staff further recommends that the Commission find that AIC is capable of managing, supervising, and financing the proposed construction without significant adverse financial consequences for the utility or its customers.

## I. BACKGROUND

On January 30, 2012, AIC filed with the Commission a Petition ("Petition") for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity ("Certificate" or "CPCN") authorizing AIC to construct, operate, and maintain a new 138 kilovolt ("kV") electrical transmission line consisting of two new non-contiguous transmission-line segments (the "New Segments") totaling approximately 8.5 miles in length connecting to an existing 1.5 mile 138 kV line segment currently classified as a distribution line (the "Existing Distribution Line") in Champaign County, Illinois. Petition, at 1. These three segments are collectively called the "Transmission Line." The Company states that the Transmission Line will connect the Bondville Route 10 and Southwest Campus substations south and west of Champaign, Illinois. Substation modifications at the Bondville, Southwest Campus, and Windsor substations (which modifications, together with the Transmission Line and all appurtenant land rights, constitute the "Project") will be required. *Id.*

On February 17, 2012, the Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ") assigned to this proceeding held a preliminary hearing and established a schedule for the submission of pre-filed testimony, hearings, and briefs. (*Tr.,* Feb. 17, 2012, pp. 12-13) The hearing was continued until May 31, 2012. (*Id.*, p. 17)

In response to the Company's filings, the following parties filed Petitions to Intervene, which were granted: the Village of Savoy, IL; Boyd Farm Trust; MACC Capital Holdings, Inc.; Curtis Orchard of Champaign, IL; Heffernan Family; Lo Family of Savoy, Illinois; and Cunningham Children's Home Foundation.

The ALJ held a status hearing on May 29, 2012, in preparation for the evidentiary hearing. At the May 31, 2012 evidentiary hearing, Greg Rockrohr, Senior Electrical Engineer in the Energy Engineering Department of the Safety and Reliability Division,

and Michael McNally, Senior Financial Analyst in the Finance Department of the Financial Analysis Division testified on behalf of Staff.

This Initial Brief will summarize some of the issues between the parties. Staff is proposing a modification to the Company's proposed route. This adjustment is contested.

## II. CERTIFICATE OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCE AND NECESSITY

On January 30, 2012, AIC filed a petition seeking a CPCN pursuant to Section 8-406.1 of the Act to construct a new 138,000 volt ("138 kV") transmission line in Champaign County between its Bondville Route 10 and Southwest Campus Substations.[1] AIC also requests that the Commission issue an order pursuant to Section 8-503 of the Act directing it to build the transmission line. (Petition, p. 1)

Staff recommends a modification to the transmission line that AIC proposes, namely, that AIC utilize dual circuit structures for the proposed line segment that extends approximately three miles south of Bondville Route 10 substation only if its planned Sidney to Rising 345 kV line follows the same route. Staff makes this recommendation with the understanding that AIC would not install and utilize dual circuit structures for this three-mile segment if it learns that its planned Sidney to Rising 345 kV transmission line will not be utilizing this same route.

[1] In addition, as part of the new 138 kV transmission line, AIC plans to utilize a 1.5 mile section of existing 138 kV line, presently classified as distribution.

**A. LEGAL STANDARD (Uncontested)**

Pursuant to Section 8-406.1 of the Act, which establishes expedited procedures for construction of new high voltage transmission lines, if the Commission finds, based upon the application filed and the evidentiary record, that the project will promote the public convenience and necessity and that all the applicable criteria are met, then it shall grant a certificate. (220 ILCS 5/8-406.1(f)) A public utility must establish three elements to support the granting of a CPCN. The applicable provision states:

> The Commission shall, after notice and hearing, grant a certificate of public convenience and necessity filed in accordance with the requirements of this Section if, based upon the application filed with the Commission and the evidentiary record, it finds the Project will promote the public convenience and necessity and that all of the following criteria are satisfied:
>
> (1) That the Project is necessary to provide adequate, reliable, and efficient service to the public utility's customers and is the least-cost means of satisfying the service needs of the public utility's customers or that the Project will promote the development of an effectively competitive electricity market that operates efficiently, is equitable to all customers, and is the least cost means of satisfying those objectives.
>
> (2) That the public utility is capable of efficiently managing and supervising the construction process and has taken sufficient action to ensure adequate and efficient construction and supervision of the construction.
>
> (3) That the public utility is capable of financing the proposed construction without significant adverse financial consequences for the utility or its customers.

(220 ILCS 5/8-406.1(f))

Staff witnesses find that, based on the evidence in the record, AIC has presented evidence establishing that each of these three requirements is met, if one modification is made.

### B. NEED FOR THE PROJECT (Uncontested)

AIC asserts that the 138 kV transmission line that it proposes is the best and least cost means to mitigate the risk of voltage collapse in the Champaign area. (Petition, pp. 2-5; Ameren Ex. 1.0, p. 28) AIC presented power flow analyses that indicate voltage collapse in the Champaign area in 2015 would be likely under three separate scenarios unless it mitigates the risk. (Ameren Ex. 1.0, pp. 16-22) Staff agrees that AIC should take steps to mitigate the risk of voltage collapse should two of its transmission elements simultaneously experience an outage, but Staff is concerned that AIC did not adequately incorporate in its plans the other transmission lines that it plans to construct in the same geographical area. (Staff Ex. 1.0, p. 10; Staff Ex. 3.0, pp. 3-4). Staff proposes one modification to the Company's proposal in order to address this concern. The modification is set forth below.

### C. LEAST COST MEANS OF SATISFYING THE SERVICE NEEDS OF THE PUBLIC UTILITY'S CUSTOMERS (Contested)

Under the Act, if the Commission finds that the Project is necessary to provide adequate, reliable, and efficient service to the public utility's customers, and is the least-cost means of satisfying the service needs of the public utility's customers, then it will grant a CPCN filed in accordance with the requirements of the applicable section. (220 ILCS 5/8-406.1(f)(1)) Staff witness Rockrohr recommends that the Commission grant a certificate pursuant to Section 8-406.1 and issue an order pursuant to Section 8-503 of the Act directing that the transmission line that AIC proposes be built with one modification to the Company's proposal. Staff witness Rockrohr proposes that the Company use dual circuit structures for the 3-mile route segment immediately south of

Bondville Route 10 Substation. (Staff Ex. 3.0, p. 2; *Tr.*, May 31, 2012, pp. *)

AIC witness Murbarger testified at the evidentiary hearing that the Company plans to file a petition for another large line in the same vicinity by November 2012. In Staff's view, Staff's modification to the Company's proposal takes this planned additional line into consideration and would result in combined cost savings of approximately $3 million. (Staff Ex. 3.0, p. 9-10; Ameren Ex. 11.0, p. 3).

**1. Ameren's Sidney to Rising 345 kV transmission line**

Staff concludes that AIC should construct approximately three miles of its proposed 138 kV transmission line on common structures with a planned 345 kV transmission line to reduce the combined cost of both transmission lines. Staff found that Ameren's plan to construct a 345 kV transmission line between its Sidney and Rising Substations by the summer of 2016 is relevant to this docket. Not only might some of the same landowners and stakeholders be involved with the routes for both lines, but there could also be cost savings if both the 138 kV and 345 kV transmission lines used the same rights-of-way and/or structures for some line segments. (Staff Ex. 1.0, p. 11; Ameren Ex. 1.4)

Ameren will likely construct both its proposed 138 kV transmission line and its planned 345 kV transmission line on a route that includes the three miles extending south from Bondville Route 10 Substation. (Staff Cross Ex. 2) Midwest Independent Transmission System Operator, Inc. ("Midwest ISO" or "MISO") designated Ameren's proposed Sidney to Rising 345 kV transmission line as a multi-value project. Ameren has already created a website and held public meetings in preparation for its planned Commission filing later in 2012 to seek a certificate to complete construction of its

planned Sidney to Rising 345 kV transmission line in 2016, and Ameren expects to receive a Commission decision relating to the Sidney to Rising 345 kV transmission line by mid-2013. (Staff Ex. 3.0, pp. 8-9; Ameren Ex. 11.0, p. 5) AIC and/or its predecessor company previously selected and acquired right-of-way for the Rising to Sidney 345 kV line, portions of which AIC proposes using for its Bondville Route 10 to Southwest Campus 138 kV transmission line. (Ameren Ex. 6.0, p. 7; Ameren Ex. 8.0, p. 4) Constructing both lines on the same structures would reduce the combined cost of the two lines by approximately $3 million. (Staff Ex. 3.0, p. 9-10; Ameren Ex. 11.0, p. 3)

Furthermore, timing is not an issue. AIC witness Jerry Murbarger stated during the evidentiary hearing that the lead times for purchasing transmission towers is approximately 40 weeks. AIC would have adequate time to purchase and install either single or dual circuit structures, whichever is appropriate, and install them prior to the summer of 2015 - after the Commission confirms a route for the Sidney to Rising 345 kV line in mid-2013. (*Tr.,* May 31, 2012, p. *)

AIC is concerned that placing both its proposed 138 kV and its planned 345 kV transmission lines on the same structures would require both lines to be taken out of service should maintenance be required on either. (Ameren Ex. 8.0, p. 3) Staff witness Rockrohr does not believe AIC's maintenance concern should be a deterrent for using dual-circuit towers for the limited distance of three miles, since required maintenance in such a short section should be very infrequent for properly constructed lines. (Staff Ex. 3.0, p. 8) Furthermore, AIC is proposing use of dual-circuit towers in other segments of its proposed transmission line. (Staff Cross Ex. 1)

**2. Ameren's alternate route**

Staff believes that the alternate route that AIC included in its petition is not a viable alternative to its preferred route. Staff points out that AIC studied several other mitigation options, in addition to constructing the Bondville Route 10 to Southwest Campus 138 kV line that it proposes. AIC could build one of these other transmission lines instead of the 138 kV line between Bondville Route 10 and Southwest Campus Substations to mitigate the risk of voltage collapse in the Champaign area. (Ameren Ex. 1.0, pp. 23-24; Ameren Ex. 1.20, p. 11 and 16) AIC concluded that constructing the 138 kV transmission line between its Bondville Route 10 and Southwest Campus Substations along the route it designated as its Primary Route would result in the least cost and lowest impacts for its customers. (Petition, pp. 2-5) Ameren also includes an alternate route for the Bondville Route 10 to Southwest Campus 138 kV transmission line in its petition. (Petition, p. 5 and Exhibit A) AIC's choice of an alternate route appears to have a higher associated cost than building other transmission lines with different endpoints, identified in Ameren Ex. 1.20, that would also adequately alleviate the risk of voltage collapse.

While Staff agrees that AIC's cost to construct its preferred route between Bondville Route 10 and Southwest Campus Substations is lower than the cost to construct any of the other transmission line mitigation options identified in Ameren Ex. 1.20, AIC's estimated cost for the alternate route appeared to be higher than the cost of these other mitigation options. Since Section 8-406.1 of the Act requires the Commission to approve the least-cost means of satisfying the service needs of AIC's

customers, and since the information that AIC provided indicates that, if the preferred route became unavailable, the alternate route that AIC included in its petition would likely be more costly than other viable alternatives, Staff does not support its use. (Staff Ex. 1.0, pp. 12-14; Staff Ex. 3.0, pp. 10-13)

In response to Mr. Rockrohr's concern, AIC witness Foster contends that the other mitigation options included in Ameren Ex. 1.20 might cost as much or more than AIC's alternate route if the routes were studied and designed. (Ameren Ex. 6.0, p. 11) AIC witnesses Foster and Murbarger both state that AIC would not now be able to complete such a detailed siting study for the other mitigation options identified in Ameren Ex. 1.20 in time to construct the transmission line by 2015. (Ameren Ex. 6.0, pp. 13-14; Ameren Ex. 8.0, p. 7) AIC does not know whether constructing other mitigation options would be more or less costly than constructing the alternate route. Staff concludes that, even though Staff and AIC disagree on the issue of AIC's alternate route, this is only an important issue relevant to this docket if the Commission orders AIC to use AIC's alternate route, which Staff does not recommend. (Staff Ex. 3.0, pp. 12-13)

### 3. Ameren's existing structures along Curtis Road between Duncan and Mattis

In rebuttal testimony, Staff recommended that AIC modify the route of its proposed 138 kV transmission line east of Interstate 57 so that it utilizes existing wooden structures along Curtis Road. Ameren's surrebuttal testimony causes Staff to change its recommendation that AIC modify its proposed route east of Interstate 57.

Existing wooden distribution poles along Curtis Road east of Duncan Road to Mattis Avenue are tall enough to support the addition of 138 kV conductors. (Staff Ex.

1.0, p. 14; Ameren Ex. 8.0, pp. 7-8) Staff witness Rockrohr previously recommended that AIC modify its route for the 138 kV transmission line to take advantage of these existing structures. Specifically, Mr. Rockrohr recommended that after crossing Interstate 57 from the west, AIC utilize a route adjacent to the northbound lanes of Interstate 57 to reach the intersection of Curtis Road and Duncan Avenue. (Staff Ex. 3.0, p. 16) Mr. Rockrohr's recommendation would allow AIC to install its proposed 138 kV transmission line on the existing tall wooden poles all the way to Mattis Avenue, where the 138 kV line would tie into AIC's existing 138 kV distribution line and back to AIC's preferred route. Mr. Rockrohr made his recommendation for three reasons. First, Interstate 57 is an existing north-south corridor that AIC's proposed 138 kV transmission line could parallel. Second, AIC estimates the savings for utilizing this route would be approximately $450,000. Third, Mr. Rockrohr understood AIC to have plans to construct a transmission line along this same route in the near future, if it is not constructed as a result of this docket, to support anticipated new load near the intersection of Interstate 57 and Curtis Road. (Staff Ex. 1.0, pp. 14-15; Staff Ex. 3.0, pp. 13-16)

AIC witness Foster explains in surrebuttal testimony that Staff witness Rockrohr misinterpreted Mr. Foster's prior testimony regarding future plans for a transmission line along Curtis Road. (Ameren Ex. 10, p. 9) The chief reason for Mr. Rockrohr's recommendation had been his understanding of AIC's plans to build a line along that route in the near future. (Staff Ex. 3.0, p. 15) Mr. Foster's surrebuttal testimony causes Mr. Rockrohr to now agree with the route that AIC proposes between Interstate 57 and Mattis Avenue, rather than the route along Interstate 57 and Curtis Road, identified as

"B" on Staff Cross Exhibit 2. (Ameren Cross Ex. 1, p.7) Consequently, Staff withdraws its earlier recommendation that AIC modify the route of its proposed 138 kV transmission line east of Interstate 57 so that it utilizes existing wooden structures along Curtis Road.

**D. MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISION (Uncontested)**

AIC witness Murbarger attests to AIC's capabilities with respect to management and supervision of the construction of the 138 kV transmission line that AIC proposes. AIC presently owns, operates, and maintains several hundred miles of transmission line in Illinois, and has already completed several transmission projects in the state. AIC has employees that Staff believes to be knowledgeable in matters of transmission line construction. Should AIC receive the CPCN it requests, it is Staff witness Rockrohr's opinion that AIC will be capable of successfully managing and supervising the construction of the project. (ICC Staff Ex. 1.0, p. 9)

**E. FINANCING (Uncontested)**

Staff witness McNally reviewed the Company's filing and the supplemental information provided in response to Staff data requests. He testified that the estimated cost of the proposed construction is approximately $34.3 million to $63.7 million, which will be incurred over several years, with a peak annual cost of the $13 million to $22.7 million in 2014. He also stated that these amounts are diminutive relative to AIC's net utility plant and operating revenues. (Staff Ex. 2.0, p. 2) In addition, the funds for the project are included in the Company's capital budget forecast, which averages approximately $584 million over the next 5 years and of which the project constitutes no more than 6% in any single year. *Id.* Therefore, Mr. McNally recommends that the

Commission find that AIC is capable of financing the proposed construction without significant adverse financial consequences for the utility or its customers. *Id.*

**F. OTHER REQUIREMENTS OF THE STATUTE ARE MET (Uncontested)**

In his Direct Testimony, Staff witness Rockrohr testifies that AIC has met the other applicable requirements of Section 8-401.1. (Staff Ex. 1.0, p. 7) He testifies that AIC has paid the application fee that Subsection 8-406.1(a)(2) requires. *Id.* In addition, AIC did hold at least three public meetings to receive public comments about the project within 6 months of filing its petition, as Subsection 8-406.1(a)(3) requires. *Id.* Mr. Rockrohr expressed some concern that AIC did not disclose at these meetings its plans to construct: (1) a new 345 kV Sidney to Rising electric transmission line that will likely occupy space in the same general area if approved; (2) a new 345/138 kV transmission substation on the west side of Champaign; and (3) a distribution substation near the intersection of Interstate 57 and Curtis Road. (*Id*., pp. 7- 8) He states that the routing choices AIC proposes may or may not be received in the same manner by area landowners and stakeholders had AIC presented facts about other transmission projects planned for the same area at its public open houses and stakeholder meetings. (Staff Ex. 1.0, p. 8) AIC also published notice in the official state newspaper within 10 days of its filing, as Section 8-406.1(d) requires. *Id.* Staff witness Rockrohr testifies that AIC did establish a dedicated website about the proposed project at least 3 weeks prior to holding its first public meeting. *Id.* Despite Mr. Rockrohr's expressed concern regarding AIC's disclosures, he nevertheless believes the other requirements of the statute have been met.

## III. ORDER DIRECTING PROJECT TO BE BUILT

AIC seeks, pursuant to Sections 8-503 and 8-406.1(i) of the Act (220 ILCS 5/8-503, 5/8-406.1(i)), an order directing that the Project be built. Pursuant to Section 8-406.1(i) of the Act, "a decision granting a certificate under this Section shall include an order pursuant to Section 8-503 of this Act authorizing or directing the construction of the high voltage electric service line and related facilities as approved by the Commission, in the manner and within the time specified in said order." (220 ILCS 5/8-503) Staff recommends that the Commission grant a certificate pursuant to Section 8-406.1 and issue an order pursuant to Section 8-503 of the Act directing the construction of the transmission line that AIC proposes be built along its preferred route with one modification. He proposes using dual circuit structures for the 3-mile route segment immediately south of Bondville Route 10 Substation. (Staff Ex. 3.0, p. 2; *Tr.*, May 31, 2012, p. *)

## IV. CONCLUSION

For the reasons set forth *supra*, Staff respectfully requests that the Commission's Final Order in the instant proceeding reflect Staff's recommendations consistent with this Initial Brief.

Respectfully submitted,

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June 12, 2012

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# APPENDIX

220 ILCS 5/8-406.1

**5/8-406.1. Certificate of public convenience and necessity; expedited procedure**

§ 8-406.1. Certificate of public convenience and necessity; expedited procedure.

(a) A public utility may apply for a certificate of public convenience and necessity pursuant to this Section for the construction of any new high voltage electric service line and related facilities (Project). To facilitate the expedited review process of an application filed pursuant to this Section, an application shall include all of the following:

(1) Information in support of the application that shall include the following:

(A) A detailed description of the Project, including location maps and plot plans to scale showing all major components.

(B) The following engineering data:

(i) a detailed Project description including:

(I) name and destination of the Project;

(II) design voltage rating (kV);

(III) operating voltage rating (kV); and

(IV) normal peak operating current rating;

(ii) a conductor, structures, and substations description including:

(I) conductor size and type;

(II) type of structures;

(III) height of typical structures;

(IV) an explanation why these structures were selected;

(V) dimensional drawings of the typical structures to be used in the Project; and

(VI) a list of the names of all new (and existing if applicable) substations or switching stations that will be associated with the proposed new high voltage electric service line;

(iii) the location of the site and right-of-way including:

(I) miles of right-of-way;

(II) miles of circuit;

(III) width of the right-of-way; and

(IV) a brief description of the area traversed by the proposed high voltage electric service line, including a description of the general land uses in the area and the type of terrain crossed by the

proposed line;

(iv) assumptions, bases, formulae, and methods used in the development and preparation of the diagrams and accompanying data, and a technical description providing the following information:

(I) number of circuits, with identification as to whether the circuit is overhead or underground;

(II) the operating voltage and frequency; and

(III) conductor size and type and number of conductors per phase;

(v) if the proposed interconnection is an overhead line, the following additional information also must be provided:

(I) the wind and ice loading design parameters;

(II) a full description and drawing of a typical supporting structure, including strength specifications;

(III) structure spacing with typical ruling and maximum spans;

(IV) conductor (phase) spacing; and

(V) the designed line-to-ground and conductor-side clearances;

(vi) if an underground or underwater interconnection is proposed, the following additional information also must be provided:

(I) burial depth;

(II) type of cable and a description of any required supporting equipment, such as insulation medium pressurizing or forced cooling;

(III) cathodic protection scheme; and

(IV) type of dielectric fluid and safeguards used to limit potential spills in waterways;

(vii) technical diagrams that provide clarification of any item under this item (1) should be included; and

(viii) applicant shall provide and identify a primary right-of-way and one or more alternate rights-of-way for the Project as part of the filing. To the extent applicable, for each right-of-way, an applicant shall provide the information described in this subsection (a). Upon a showing of good cause in its filing, an applicant may be excused from providing and identifying alternate rights-of-way.

(2) An application fee of $100,000, which shall be paid into the Public Utility Fund at the time the Chief Clerk of the Commission deems it complete and accepts the filing.

(3) Information showing that the utility has held a minimum of 3 pre-filing public meetings to receive public comment concerning the Project in each county where the Project is to be located, no earlier than 6 months prior to the filing of the application. Notice of the public meeting shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation within the affected county once a week for 3 consecutive weeks, beginning no earlier than one month prior to the first public meeting. If the Project traverses 2 contiguous counties and where in one county the transmission line mileage

and number of landowners over whose property the proposed route traverses is 1/5 or less of the transmission line mileage and number of such landowners of the other county, then the utility may combine the 3 pre-filing meetings in the county with the greater transmission line mileage and affected landowners. All other requirements regarding pre-filing meetings shall apply in both counties. Notice of the public meeting, including a description of the Project, must be provided in writing to the clerk of each county where the Project is to be located. A representative of the Commission shall be invited to each pre-filing public meeting.

(b) At the first status hearing the administrative law judge shall set a schedule for discovery that shall take into consideration the expedited nature of the proceeding.

(c) Nothing in this Section prohibits a utility from requesting, or the Commission from approving, protection of confidential or proprietary information under applicable law. The public utility may seek confidential protection of any of the information provided pursuant to this Section, subject to Commission approval.

(d) The public utility shall publish notice of its application in the official State newspaper within 10 days following the date of the application's filing.

(e) The public utility shall establish a dedicated website for the Project 3 weeks prior to the first public meeting and maintain the website until construction of the Project is complete. The website address shall be included in all public notices.

(f) The Commission shall, after notice and hearing, grant a certificate of public convenience and necessity filed in accordance with the requirements of this Section if, based upon the application filed with the Commission and the evidentiary record, it finds the Project will promote the public convenience and necessity and that all of the following criteria are satisfied:

(1) That the Project is necessary to provide adequate, reliable, and efficient service to the public utility's customers and is the least-cost means of satisfying the service needs of the public utility's customers or that the Project will promote the development of an effectively competitive electricity market that operates efficiently, is equitable to all customers, and is the least cost means of satisfying those objectives.

(2) That the public utility is capable of efficiently managing and supervising the construction process and has taken sufficient action to ensure adequate and efficient construction and supervision of the construction.

(3) That the public utility is capable of financing the proposed construction without significant adverse financial consequences for the utility or its customers.

(g) The Commission shall issue its decision with findings of fact and conclusions of law granting or denying the application no later than 150 days after the application is filed. The Commission may extend the 150-day deadline upon notice by an additional 75 days if, on or before the 30th day after the filing of the application, the Commission finds that good cause exists to extend the 150-day period.

(h) In the event the Commission grants a public utility's application for a certificate pursuant to this Section, the public utility shall pay a one-time construction fee to each county in which the Project is constructed within 30 days after the completion of construction. The construction fee shall be $20,000 per mile of high voltage electric service line constructed in that county, or a proportionate fraction of that fee. The fee shall be in lieu of any permitting fees that otherwise would be imposed by a county. Counties receiving a payment under this subsection (h) may distribute all or portions of the fee to local taxing districts in that county.

(i) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this Act, a decision granting a certificate under this

Section shall include an order pursuant to Section 8-503 of this Act authorizing or directing the construction of the high voltage electric service line and related facilities as approved by the Commission, in the manner and within the time specified in said order.